

CORPORATE
INVOLVEMENT
IN EDUCATION

HIGH STANDARDS FOR ACHIEVEMENT



standards

"All states and schools will have
challenging and clear standards of
achievement and accountability for
all children, and effective strategies
for reaching those standards."

The Seven Priorities of the U.S. Department of Education

CORPORATE INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

Today, there is an unprecedented movement toward accountability in our education system. All 50 states have put in place their own challenging academic standards for students and are now implementing assessments linked to those standards. Ensuring that these standards reach every classroom and that all students meet high expectations require all stakeholders—from teachers and parents to business and community leaders—to be involved at the local level and take responsibility for student performance and the quality of education America's children receive.

More than at any time in our nation's history, the business community depends on a highly educated workforce. It is critical for employers to be able to have confidence in a high school diploma as evidence that graduates are prepared with the requisite skills and are able to meet the challenges of competing in the information age. By investing in our children's education and helping students reach high standards, businesses are investing in their own long-term success.

standards

REACHING HIGH STANDARDS

Businesses can join schools in helping students to meet new standards by continuing to set high expectations for all children and providing the resources necessary to ensure that all children have the opportunity to achieve at high levels. States and school districts must align curricula, textbooks, instructional methods, and professional development with the new standards. Extended learning opportunities must be provided to students who are failing or at risk of failing to meet the standards. Teachers must be given the time and training to prepare their curriculum and instruction to help students meet the tougher requirements.

Passing students along in school when they are unprepared or retaining them without addressing their needs denies students access to opportunities at the next level of schooling, in postsecondary education, and in the workplace. Both policies send a message to students that little is expected from them and that they do not warrant the time and effort it would take to help them be successful in school. Setting high standards and providing the resources that ensure they will be met communicates to all students that they have worth and are valuable to our nation's future. Reaching high standards isn't easy; that's why business involvement with educators and parents is a necessary ingredient for success.

"I refuse to believe that our children aren't smart enough or our educators aren't good enough. I refuse to send our children out into the most competitive international economy in world history without the education they will need to succeed for themselves and for our country. We must never go back to the days when standards were too low, unclear, or nonexistent. Never."

U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

Examples of Businesses Helping Students Achieve High Standards

Strategies for Helping Students Meet High Standards

Businesses can advocate and support comprehensive approaches to helping students meet high standards by providing leadership, resources, and support on the state and local level to:

- Set clear objectives for students to meet performance standards at key grades;
- Identify student needs early in order to apply appropriate instructional strategies;
- Emphasize early childhood literacy;
- Focus on providing high-quality curriculum, instruction, and professional development that deepens teachers' content knowledge;
- Provide summer school for students who are not meeting high standards;
- Extend learning time through before- and after-school programs, tutoring, and partnerships with cultural groups in the community;
- Develop transitional and dropout prevention programs for middle and high school students; and
- Hold schools accountable by publicly reporting school performance, rewarding school improvement, and intervening in low-performing schools.

Another strategy is to involve your business in helping to change the whole school environment to meet the high standards. The U.S. Department of Education provides resources for local schools that are involved in this effort, including grants to reduce class size in the early grades, to implement reforms based on innovative models, to create smaller learning communities, and to support the development of charter schools.

Emphasize Early Childhood Literacy

The Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Appleton, Wisconsin, brought together employers and employees to develop a plan for reading to young students during the summer and into the school year. The Chamber helped develop a reading kit, which has been distributed to thousands of parents, employees, and community reading volunteers since it began the program in 1995. Evaluations of the effects of the program have shown that the students did not lose reading skills over the summer, as often happens with low-income children, and that Appleton student achievement scores increased by almost 80 percent.

Focus on Providing High-Quality Curriculum and Instruction

Nortel Networks created a teacher training program emphasizing, applying and utilizing technology in the classroom setting. Nortel employees volunteer on Saturdays at the company's local Technical Education Center in North Carolina, training teachers and administrators in more than 16 different software courses in both the Macintosh and PC environments. The program has recently been approved for Continuing Education Credit as a part of North Carolina's teacher certification requirements and will begin training 1,300 teachers each year. Nortel is helping teachers integrate computer technology into the classroom, creating a more stimulating learning experience for North Carolina's students.

Develop Transitional and Dropout Prevention Programs for Middle and High School Students

Shell Oil Company working in partnership with 10 inner-city schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District, developed an after-school program that has become a nationwide effort to help children learn valuable job skills, including effective job searching, interviewing, computer training, and communication techniques for the workplace. Students receive school credit for the classroom-based program and, when they have completed the training, they are placed into after-school jobs and local businesses, while Shell Oil pays the wages. Employers also commit to serve as mentors and advise the students on career planning. Shell Oil has found that out of those who participate in the program, over 80 percent continue onto college after high school.

"Better Education Is Everybody's Business"

Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley

If you are interested in learning
more about how to help schools
meet high standards, please contact
the Corporate Outreach Office at
(202) 205-8599 or visit our

Web site:

www.ed.gov/offices/OIIA/OIA



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